


A. E. Waite

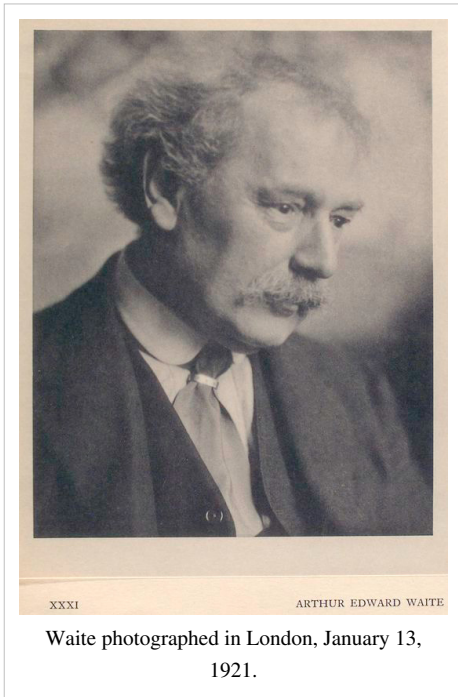
Arthur Edward Waite	
 <p style="text-align: center;">Arthur Edward Waite in the early 1880s</p>	
Born	October 2, 1857 Brooklyn, New York
Died	May 19, 1942 (aged 84) London
Resting place	Bishopsbourne Village, in the county of Kent, England
Nationality	British
Known for	Rider-Waite Tarot deck
Spouse(s)	Ada Lakeman, Mary Broadbent Schofield
Children	Sybil Waite
Parents	Captain Charles F. Waite, Emma Lovell
Relatives	Frederika Waite

Arthur Edward Waite (October 2, 1857 – May 19, 1942) was a scholarly mystic who wrote extensively on occult and esoteric matters, and was the co-creator of the Rider-Waite Tarot deck. As his biographer, R.A. Gilbert described him, "Waite's name has survived because he was the first to attempt a systematic study of the history of western occultism—viewed as a spiritual tradition rather than as aspects of proto-science or as the pathology of religion."^[1]

Early life

Waite was born in the United States.^[2] Waite's father, Capt. Charles F. Waite, died when he was very young, and his widowed mother, Emma Lovell, returned to her home country of England, where he was then raised.^[3] As they were not well off, Waite was educated at a small private school in North London. When he was 13, he was then educated at St. Charles' College.^[4] When he left school to become a clerk he wrote verse in his spare time. The death of his sister, Frederika Waite, in 1874 soon attracted him into psychical research. At 21, he began to read regularly in the Library of the British Museum, studying many branches of esotericism.

When Waite was almost 30, he married Ada Lakeman (also called "Lucasta") and they had one daughter, Sybil.^[5] Some time after Lucasta's death in 1924, Waite married Mary Broadbent Schofield. He spent most of his life in or near London, connected to various publishing houses, and editing a magazine *The Unknown World*.



Career

Golden Dawn

Waite joined the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in January 1891 after being introduced by E.W. Berridge.^[6] He became a Freemason in 1901,^{[7][8]} and entered the *Societas Rosicruciana in Anglia* in 1902. The Golden Dawn was torn by internal feuding until Waite's departure in 1914; later he formed the Fellowship of the Rosy Cross,^[9] not to be confused with the Societas Rosicruciana. By that time there existed some half-dozen offshoots from the original Golden Dawn, and as a whole it never recovered.^[10]

Aleister Crowley, Waite's foe, referred to him as a villainous "Arthwate" in his novel *Moonchild* and referred to him in his magazine *Equinox*. Lovecraft has a villainous wizard in his short story "The Thing on the Doorstep" called Ephraim Waite; according to Robert M. Price this character was based on Waite.^[11]

Author and scholar

Waite was a prolific author with many of his works being well received in academic circles. He wrote occult texts on subjects including divination, esotericism, Rosicrucianism, Freemasonry, and ceremonial magic, Kabbalism and alchemy; he also translated and reissued several important mystical and alchemical works. His works on the Holy Grail, influenced by his friendship with Arthur Machen, were particularly notable.^{[12][13]} A number of his volumes remain in print, *The Book of Ceremonial Magic* (1911), *The Holy Kabbalah* (1929), *A New Encyclopedia of Freemasonry* (1921), and his edited translation of Eliphas Levi's *Transcendental Magic, its Doctrine and Ritual* (1896) among others by Levi, having seen reprints in recent years.

Tarot deck

Waite is best known as the co-creator of the popular and widely used Rider-Waite Tarot deck and author of its companion volume, the *Key to the Tarot*, republished in expanded form the following year, 1911, as the *Pictorial Key to the Tarot*, a guide to Tarot reading.^[14] The Rider-Waite-Smith tarot was notable for being one of the first tarot decks to illustrate all 78 cards fully, in addition to the 22 major arcana cards. Golden Dawn member Pamela Colman Smith illustrated the cards for Waite, and the deck was first published in 1909. It remains in publication today.

Other works

- Waite, Edward, *Inner and Outer Order Initiations of the Holy Order of the Golden Dawn*, Canada: Burnaby, 2005. ISBN 0-9735931-7-2.
- Waite, Arthur Edward, *The Brotherhood of the Rosy Cross: Being Records of the House of the Holy Spirit in its Inward and Outward History*, London: William Rider & Son Ltd., 1924.
- Waite, Arthur Edward, *Israfil: Letters, Visions and Poems*, London: Allen, 1886.
- Waite, Arthur Edward, *A New Encyclopaedia of Freemasonry (Ars Magna Latomorum) and of Cognate Instituted Mysteries: Their Rites, Literature, and History*, New York: Wings Books, 1994. ISBN 0517191482.
- Waite, Arthur Edward, *Theories As to the Authorship of the Rosicrucian Manifestoes*, Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2005. ISBN 1-4253-3290-0.
- Waite, Arthur Edward, *The Hidden Church of the Holy Grail: Its Legends and Symbolism Considered in Their Affinity with Certain Mysteries of Initiation and Other Traces of a Secret Tradition in Christian Times*, Amsterdam, the Netherlands: Fredonia Books, 2002. ISBN 1-58963-905-7.

References

- [1] Gilbert, R.A. *A.E. Waite: Magician of Many Parts*, Wellingborough, Northhamptonshire, 1987, p. 361.
- [2] "Arthur Edward Waite" (<http://www.kheper.net/topics/Hermeticism/Waite.html>). Kheper. .
- [3] "Arthur Edward Waite" (<http://www.controversial.com/Arthur Edward Waite.htm>). Controversial. .
- [4] "Arthur Edward Waite" (http://everything2.com/index.pl?node_id=1674656). Everything2.com. .
- [5] "Arthur Edward Waite" (<http://www.nndb.com/people/958/000050808/>). NNDB. .
- [6] King, Modern RM, page 52
- [7] "Arthur E. Waite" (http://freemasonry.bcy.ca/biography/esoterica/waite_a/waite_a.html). Freemasonry.bcy.ca. . Retrieved 2012-03-31.
- [8] Gilbert, R. A.. "The Masonic Career of A. E. Waite" (<http://www.mastermason.com/luxoculta/waite.htm>). *Ars Quatuor Coronatorum*. QCCC Correspondence Circle Limited. . Retrieved 23 May 2010.
- [9] "Arthur Edward Waite by Lee Prosser" (http://www.ghostvillage.com/resources/2004/resources_04062004.shtml). Ghostvillage.com. . Retrieved 2012-03-31.
- [10] Howe, Ellic, *The Magicians of the Golden Dawn*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1972
- [11] Price, Robert M., ed. (1995). *The Azathoth Cycle: tales of the blind idiot god*. Oakland, California: Chaosium. p. vi. ISBN 978-1-56882-040-8.
- [12] Waite, A.E., *Shadows of Life and Thought: A Retrospective Review in the Form of Memoirs*, London: Selwyn and Blount, 1938
- [13] Gilbert, R.A., *A.E. Waite: Magician of Many Parts*, Wellingborough, Northhamptonshire, 1987
- [14] Waite, A.E., *The Key to the Tarot*, London, 1910

Sources

- King, Francis X.. *Modern Ritual Magic: The Rise of Western Occultism* (2nd ed.).

External links

- Short Biography (<http://autorbis.net/tarot/biography/tarot-history-researchers/arthur-edward-waite.html>)
- "The Masonic Career of A.E. Waite" (<http://www.mastermason.com/luxoculta/waite.htm>), *AQC* Vol 99 1986
- Genealogy and links (<http://www.waitegenealogy.org/FamilyGroups/aewaite.htm>)
- Works by Arthur Edward Waite (<http://www.archive.org/search.php?query=creator:Arthur Edward Waite AND mediatype:texts>) at Internet Archive (scanned books original editions color illustrated)
- Works by Arthur Edward Waite (http://www.sacred-texts.com/cat/srchauth.htm?search_str=waite) at sacred-texts.com (plain text and HTML)
- Works by Arthur Edward Waite ([http://www.gutenberg.org/author/Arthur_Edward_Waite_\(1857-1942\)](http://www.gutenberg.org/author/Arthur_Edward_Waite_(1857-1942))) at Project Gutenberg
- Bibliography of A.E. Waite (<http://www.booksellerworld.com/ae-waite.htm>)

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